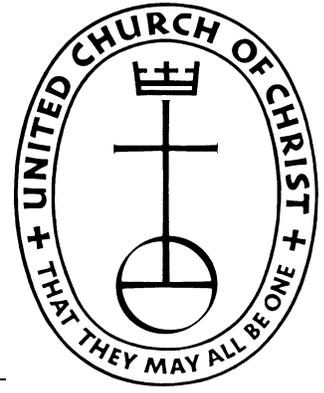


# First Christian United Church of Christ Newsletter February 2017

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## TEN WAYS TO LOVE...

1. Listen without interrupting. (Proverbs 18)
2. Speak without accusing. (James 1:19)
3. Give without sparing. (Proverbs 21:26)
4. Pray without ceasing. (Colossians 1:9)
5. Answer without arguing. (Proverbs 17:1)
6. Share without pretending. (Ephesians 4:15)
7. Enjoy without complaint. (Philippians 2:14)
8. Trust without wavering. (Corinthians 13:7)
9. Forgive without punishing (Colossians 3:13)
10. Promise without forgetting. (Proverbs 13:12)

# **First Christian UCC – February 2017 Newsletter**

## **PASTOR'S COLUMN**

Let me bring you up to date on a new development in church life. As you may recall, about a year ago I was in the process of applying for a Lilly grant in support of a 4 ½ month sabbatical that was a part of the terms of my call as your pastor. Unfortunately, my grant proposal was not approved. Shortly after learning that news, the church received an offer to purchase our property. With the potential for a looming sale of the church in play, I put on hold any thought of how a sabbatical might be worked out.

Over the weeks, however, it became clear that the offer we received was not a serious one. At the December meeting of the Official Board, it was decided to reject the buyer's reduced counter-offer, and so we moved on. With that issue resolved, I once again considered the option of a sabbatical and began to work on a plan. At its January meeting, the Board authorized that plan for a three – month sabbatical this summer when things should be a little quieter around church. The Executive Committee of the Board of Deacons, along with Ken Little as our church treasurer, will serve as a task force to work out the final details.

Margot will be leading a group of pastors from our Southern Conference on a two-week trip to Germany at the end of May. My plan is to meet her at the end of her time there for the start of my sabbatical. We hope to do some traveling in Europe. Then, we'll return home before heading out to Colorado to spend time with our grandchildren and their family. We hope to follow that with an opportunity to explore a little of the far west. To top it all off, our oldest daughter hopes to finish her degree program and graduate in August.

Besides all this activity, there is an added bonus that Margot will return from her sojourn in Ashville. Her last Sunday at First Congregational will be on May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday before she begins her trip to Germany.

There are still many details to be worked out with regard to this time away. In particular, there are the issues of who will serve as interim during this time and exactly what their responsibilities will be. I'll share further details as they become clear. In the meantime, I am excited for this opportunity and grateful to the church for helping to make it possible.

Blessings upon you!

*Mark*

## **ANNUAL MEETING SET – FEBRUARY 5TH**

Following worship on February 5<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our Annual Congregational Meeting. At that time, we will approve the church's 2016 Annual Report. Copies of this report are available in the church office as well as in the sanctuary. If you need one and can't pick it up, let us know and we'll get one to you. Also available are the latest, updated church directories (printed on goldenrod-colored paper).

In addition to this regular business, we will install new church officers and hold a brief memorial service for those church members who passed away in 2016.

There is one other special piece of business. As you know, this past summer a sinkhole opened up in the side church parking lot. The bill for that work was finally submitted. It totaled over \$10,000.00. Various available funds have been tapped to cover the majority of this amount, however, a balance of \$1,475.00 remains. To cover this gap, the congregation will be asked to approve a recommendation from the Official Board that some proceeds from the Building Endowment Fund be used for this purpose. This is the first time the proceeds from this fund have been used in at least the last ten years.

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## **SPECIAL SERVICE WILL CELEBRATE OLD HYMNS**

Jamie Fonville deserves credit for this idea. Recently he suggested that we hold a service in which we could sing a number of the good, old hymns. He even shared a book that collected the stories behind the hymns. So mark your calendars. February 12<sup>th</sup> is the date.

On that Sunday, not only will there be a lot of good hymn – singing but you will also have an opportunity to hear “the rest of the story,” as Paul Harvey used to say. If there is a good response, we’ll have to try this type of service again. Come – invite a friend to join you.

## **LENTEN CLASS ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN REVELATION TO BE HELD**

Last year the Board of Christian Education sponsored a special educational opportunity. For four consecutive Sundays, Sunday School classes were combined and gathered in the Bray Fellowship Hall for a program on the Book of Revelation led by Dr. Lynn Huber. Dr. Huber is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Religious Studies Department at Elon University. After such a great experience last year, Lynn has agreed to return and take a closer look at the seven letters to the seven churches at the start of Revelation. Classes will begin on February 26<sup>th</sup> and run through March 12<sup>th</sup>. Come and learn what the Spirit was saying to the seven churches in those ancient days, and what the Spirit might be saying to us as a church today!

## **SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION ON CHURCH WEB PAGE**

Carrie McLean Taylor was a long-time member here at First Christian whose heart was firmly rooted in education. Upon her death, a scholarship fund was established in her honor. Every year, proceeds from that fund help to support the educational endeavors of young people associated with the church. In order to make the application process a little easier, the application has been linked to the church’s web page - [firstchristianucc.org](http://firstchristianucc.org). The application and instructions can be downloaded and printed. Then the form can be filled out and returned by fax, scanned and attached to an email, or mailed through the US Postal Service. In the future, we hope that submissions may be possible directly from the web page. The deadline for application submissions is June 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **THE SUPPER CLUB – NEXT GATHERING**

The Supper Club’s next gathering will be on February 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at Aleko’s Restaurant, 3281 S Church St, Burlington. To make a reservation, please call Eleanor Lovgren at 226-2671 by February 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:00 pm. All are welcomed. Everyone pays their own bills. Invite a friend!

# **First Christian UCC – February 2017 Newsletter**

## **NOON LENTEN SERVICES AND LUNCHEONS ON HIATUS**

For years, members of churches here in Burlington have gathered for a half hour service of worship followed by a simple lunch on Tuesdays throughout the season of Lent. However, each year the number of those attending those services has dwindled. It seemed that it was time for a change.

At a recent meeting of the Burlington Clergy Association a decision was made. This year we will forgo these weekly events and gather feedback from participating congregations as to what might be meaningful moving forward.

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, there was a joint ecumenical service at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was reported at the clergy luncheon that just under 700 people attended this event. There was a sense that perhaps occasional services of this nature might better meet the spiritual needs of congregants and be a suitable substitute for the traditional Lenten programs.

What do you think? What are your ideas? Please share them with either Mark or a deacon. The clergy group hopes to start laying the foundation for what may come next in the near future.

## **FEBRUARY IN THE ART GALLERY**

The hallway between our Education Building and the sanctuary has been much more colorful these past several months thanks to numerous artists within the First Christian family. We have been treated to both photography as well as paintings. That tradition will continue in February with the art of Stewart Haithcock. As you may know, Stewart is the son of Elsie Bolick and a contributor to our art show two years ago. His art will be on display the four Sundays in February. Stop by and check it out!

## **CHURCH WOMEN UNITED ANNUAL MEETING**

The local charter of Church Women United will hold a “Valentine Tea” along with their annual meeting on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. The group will meet at the First United Methodist Church of Graham at 2:00 pm. The church is located at 303 N. Main Street. “Heart to Heart” is the theme of this year’s event. Bobbye Mebane is planning to attend. I’m sure she would like some company!

## **NEW FREE HEALTH CLINIC OPENING**

On February 25<sup>th</sup> a new free health clinic is being opened in the Burlington Masjid (in the old St. John’s New Mission Church building). The “Al-Agsa Clinic” is a collaboration between several faith partners.

To celebrate the opening, not only will health care be administered, but a \$5 gift card will be given to those who come with a bag of food. If you would like to help support this effort please bring packaged crackers (Nabs), canned soup, oatmeal (boxed with individual servicing packets), as well as microwavable macaroni and cheese. There will be a box inside the door of the Bray Fellowship Hall for food contributions. Look for the box marked “Al-Agsa Clinic”.

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## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The Margaret Lightbourne Circle will meet Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup> in the Bray Fellowship Hall at 1:30 pm.

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### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year to Date through 12-31-16

	Actual	Budget
Income:	\$228,648.03	\$208,285.00
<u>Expense</u>	<u>\$195,369.92</u>	<u>\$208,185.00</u>
Net Balance:	\$ 33,278.11	\$100.00

Balance in Checking 12-31-16 \$26,949.66

As you can see, everyone's continued support is still greatly needed to carry on the ministry of the church. Please send in your giving today.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ken Little and Connie Collins  
Treasurer and Accounting Manager

#### **OUR MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAM**

**Office Hours:**

***Tuesday–Thursday 9 am–Noon & 12:30–  
3:30pm***

***Monday & Friday, closed***

Ministers—All the People of the Church

Mark Pickett—Pastor

Matt Rice—Organist/Choirmaster

Cheyenne Collins—Childcare Provider

Joan Paschal —Office Support

Connie Collins—Financial Support

Rodney Paul—Custodian